

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



THE GARDEN WILDERNESS.

TOO SOON.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—AT THE ROMAN VILLA.

NEXT morning was full of bright sunshine. Ursula had been very tired on her arrival, and had submitted to go to bed at once without any attempt at seeing the beauties of the place. But now, after breakfast, Miss Fraser came to fetch her, pronounced her cooler and in every way better, and promised that she should explore the garden before the sun grew too fierce.

The change and the excitement had done wonders for Ursula. She found her way to the large marble-floored room into which they had been shown on their arrival. A comfortable chair had been placed in one of the windows, and she sat down and gazed out with that exquisite freshness of rapture which is to the weak frame or exhausted brain as invigorating as if new life-blood were poured into the veins.

The garden, a picturesque wilderness, lay at some depth below the windows; a stone terrace, variegated with moss, led down into it by a broken flight of

steps at either end. There seemed to be groves of olive and cypress, and on one side a long avenue of cropped ilex-trees; their formal, stiffly-grouped branches like a succession of grand candelabra. But the view beyond the garden chained Ursula's eyes and thoughts. The villa was placed on the side of the hill, so that the grounds sloped downwards from it, and far away beyond these stretched the wide desert-like Campagna, with its blue horizon of Mediterranean Sea, and standing up in its midst, phantom-like, loomed the dome of St. Peter's, keeping watch and ward over the once imperial city.

When Miss Fraser joined her patient, she found her with glowing cheeks and tearful eyelashes.

"Is it not grand? is it not glorious?" she exclaimed; "but, oh, how inexpressibly sad—to think of what Rome was and what it is. Just now I saw it all perfect in my mind, the palace of the Cæsars, the house of Constantine, the arches, the aqueducts, the Capitol. Oh! why does ruin and decay come upon what can never be restored?"

She looked up; she had not spoken to Miss Fraser; she had uttered her thoughts, but as she ended there was no answering sympathy; it seemed to Ursula that the strong-minded woman looked frightened, and perhaps the girl's dark eyes, dilated with enthusiasm, had a slightly frenzied expression.

"Come into the garden, won't you?" she said, "it will be too hot presently."

Ursula sighed, and followed silently out of the open window into a stone balcony which led down to the terrace below.

"She thinks me silly and romantic; I suppose Michael would think so too. But what is one to do with feelings? Mine are real, I don't affect them. Must I keep them corked down tightly all my life, and try and behave exactly as other people behave? I can't believe this is right. There are not two leaves alike on a tree, why should men and women strive to conform themselves to one pattern?"

But her reflections broke off suddenly when she reached the garden itself.

Formerly there had been closely shaven lawns bordered by cypresses, with here and there a grey-green statue placed in between them; but the grass had been left to grow long and wild; it was not so much a garden as a wilderness. In the centre of the first grass-plot was a grand old marble fountain, but ferns and tall grass had circled closely round it; an overgrowth of roses, too, had flung itself from a raised bank behind, and had completely vested the presiding nymph in their glowing wealth of blossom. Beyond the fountain came a steep descent of tufted steps, leading to an alley of shining laurels, so dense on either side that the alley looked more like a path between thick walls of these noble, glossy leaves. Beyond the laurels were fountains, statues, grottoes; a most picturesque wilderness, with roses and honeysuckle and magnolias flinging themselves in lavish bounty on every object they could find to cling to; and backing these were groves of olive and evergreen oaks, among which, even at this hour, the nightingales were trilling out sweet notes preparing for fuller song by-and-by when evening drew on.

Ursula's delight could not find expression. She fluttered here and there like a butterfly, gathering roses, admiring with passionate enthusiasm the picturesque beauty of contrasts afforded by the ruined grey fountains and the exquisite green and brilliant blossoms of the trailing creepers over them—the

statues and the sombre velvet of the cypresses; and her enthusiasm reached its height when she came to a point farther down the sloping garden, and flung herself on a stone bench beneath a spreading ilex, the magnificent picture of the Campagna spreading its vast desert-like expanse to the shores of the blue sea.

She had outstripped Miss Fraser, she was glad to sit here alone, free to rave as much as she pleased; and then, as her enthusiastic delight exhausted itself, her thoughts went back to Michael.

"He must come here, we must see this place together; but then, if he does not admire it as I do, if he does not feel its beauty—ah! that is it, some people only see the beautiful, and others feel it vibrate through every nerve: if Michael is like this, only calm and critical, that would make things worse; I should know then the certainty of that which now I only fear."

Her excitement had carried her along till now as if her feet had wings; but this thought checked her and brought a chill depression. By the time Miss Fraser reached her, Ursula had grown pale and faint.

Rachel shook her head.

"I shall have to get a set of leading-strings," she said, but she smiled; "the fresh air is making you frisky and refractory. You must come in and have your soup, my dear, and lie down a bit."

"I almost think," she went on, when she had drawn Ursula's hand through her arm, "that there may be a letter from Michael. Your father said he would send it out at once if it came."

Ursula grew red, but she did not answer.

She had not said a word to her father about sending Michael's letter. Either Rachel was absurdly fond of her cousin, or she was a busybody; but Ursula was so utterly exhausted by the time she reached the villa that she was glad to lie on a couch while Rachel gave her soup almost as if she had been helpless.

She fell asleep as soon as she had taken it. When she awakened, Miss Fraser was sitting near her with a letter in her hand. She held it out to Ursula when she saw she was awake.

The girl took it quietly, without the slightest show of emotion.

"She does not care for him at all," said Miss Fraser. She got up and went to the window. She was trying to conquer the anger that had flamed up against Ursula. It did not occur to her that if Michael's wife had been alone she might have showed more emotion than she chose to betray under her watchful eyes.

"She is a cold-hearted little puss, after all; just now raving and ranting about Rome and its ruins, and not a word or a smile for her husband's letter. I have no patience with such unreal women, though I quite understand how Michael was deceived by all that impulsive manner, and thought, poor fellow, he should find a warm heart beneath it. He is not the first who has found to his cost that a very shallow brook has often more sound than a deep river."

Meantime the "shallow brook" was so disturbed that only Miss Fraser's presence restrained her from a passionate outburst.

She folded her letter, and replaced it in its envelope, but she could not trust herself to speak.

Miss Fraser had stood tapping her fingers on the window-ledge, wholly unconscious that she had frightened away a lovely green and gold lizard which

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had been peeping at her with his bright eyes from the clustering vine leaves which covered the walls of the villa. Miss Fraser was calm and just—for a woman; but she shared the inevitable portion of Eve's daughters, she was inquisitive.

"Well, Ursula"—she turned round, but she did not look at her patient—"how is Michael, and when does he expect us?"

There was a little pause, and then Ursula said, very coldly:—

"He does not say how he is, and he does not say when he expects us."

"What does he say?" and then Miss Fraser checked herself with a slight blush.

"Really, I don't think he says anything, except that he hopes you and my father are well, and that I am convalescent."

Miss Fraser looked, and she saw that Ursula's lips were closed in the same determined fashion in which she had closed them on the way from Rome.

"She's not strong enough to-day," Ursula's mentor sighed; "whatever is to be done with the naughty spoiled child? I believe the best plan would be to take her straight home to Michael, whether she likes it or not, and let him lecture her. Perhaps her father may do her good. I must speak out to somebody."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—STILL DELAY.

At the end of a fortnight Mr. Williams arrived at the villa. For the present he had finished his business in Rome. He found Miss Fraser alone in the sala; Ursula was sitting out in the garden.

"How soon do you think she will be able to travel?" he asked.

"I think she might travel now, but she says she wishes to remain here."

"Ah, that is only out of consideration for me. Poor dear child!"—he looked anxiously in Miss Fraser's grave face—"she sacrificed her own feelings in remaining with me before her illness."

"Do you think so?" There was something so very sarcastic in her tone, that he looked up hastily, and for the first time he thought Rachel Fraser had a stern unloveable face. "I do not wish to take any credit from Ursula on the score of affection for you," she said, "but my idea is that she pleased herself entirely by remaining with you; she certainly shows no wish to go back to my cousin."

The words jarred Mr. Williams; he thought the subject best left undiscussed.

"Well," he said, "I have no doubt Michael and she understand their own affairs best; however, if you think Ursula is fit to travel, I will soon arrange our return. I shall be glad to take her home."

Miss Fraser paused, and then she spoke abruptly.

"Ursula is your child, Mr. Williams; it is natural you should take her part; and Michael is my cousin, therefore, perhaps, I incline too much to his side of the question; but still I must think that as Ursula's father you might counsel a more dutiful course than she seems inclined to adopt towards her husband."

But Mr. Williams had a more sympathetic nature than Miss Fraser had.

"No, Miss Fraser, I cannot interfere," he said; "I have no reason to suppose that there is any estrangement between my daughter and her husband; and even if there were any, I believe interference would do harm rather than good."

He bowed gravely, and went into the garden to find Ursula.

Miss Fraser's lip curled. "That man has lived among books until he has not an atom of common sense left. I never heard of such a thing. I wonder if he knows that Ursula has not written to Michael once since her illness. He shall know it, before long, too."

Miss Fraser waited anxiously. She expected that Mr. Williams would propose to Ursula to return home; but she heard no allusion made to it when they both came in together.

The father and daughter talked throughout the evening, but Miss Fraser withdrew from Ursula's efforts to include her in their conversation, and sat stiffening in silence.

When she came to Ursula's room as usual to see if she had all she wanted, the girl looked up archly in her grave face. But Miss Fraser would not see the look; she kissed Ursula's forehead and turned to leave the room.

Ursula caught her arm, and held her fast.

"I want to speak to you, please," she said. "What is the matter? Have you and my father quarrelled?—you look so glum at one another."

It was difficult to harden herself against the sweet smiling face; but Rachel was doing what she considered her duty, and she drew away from Ursula.

"Certainly not; your father and I have been talking about going home; he asked me when you would be ready, and I said you might travel now if you like."

Ursula turned white. In an instant her face had grown as hard as Miss Fraser's.

"I cannot go home yet. I like this place, and I do not wish to leave it."

"That is mere selfishness. I made some excuse for you while you were in Rome, but your father wishes to go home now. It is no question of duty to him, surely, that keeps you, Ursula—a mistaken duty at best; for a husband is a wife's chief duty."

Ursula pressed her lips tightly together, it was so very hard to keep back the old rebellious feeling; it seemed to her that this was not the woman she had grown to love and cling to, but the overbearing, interfering Miss Fraser she had so hated.

Miss Fraser glanced at her when no answer came, and the pale resolute face and firmly closed lips warned her that this was not the most judicious moment for argument.

"You are tired now, and you don't know how you feel; we can settle to-morrow about going home," and she went away.

Ursula breathed freely as soon as she was left alone.

"It was as much as I could do to keep quiet. I could not have borne much more, but she has been so very good to me that I am resolved not to quarrel with her. I know she thinks I am not grateful to her. I am, but what business is it of hers how I behave to Michael? If my father wishes to go home that is another matter—well, I shall hear what he says."

She had a restless, troubled night, the fever still lingered in an intermittent form, and Mr. Williams had heard such accounts of the malaria which arose from the Campagna at this season, that he thought Ursula would be much safer in England, and he made up his mind the sooner they were off the better.

"You would like to go home, dear, wouldn't you?" he said, when Miss Fraser had left him alone with his daughter. He did not speak naturally, for Miss Fraser's words still troubled him, although he had refused to believe in them.

"I like being here; don't you?" said Ursula.

Her father looked at her, doubtful of her real meaning; then it seemed to him she was speaking simply. She really wished to stay at Albano.

"Well, it is very pleasant, but I am not quite sure that it is altogether healthy, and I think the change would strengthen you, my dear," he said.

There was the tenderness in his voice which it seemed to Ursula had only come there since her aunt's death. She put both arms round his neck and kissed him.

"If you wish to go, papa, I am ready; but if it is only for me, you know what I like always does me good, so let me stay a little longer, won't you?"

Mr. Williams had a secret consciousness of weakness, but he could not resist those pleading eyes.

"Very well, my dear, we will see how you are at the end of a week. He kissed Ursula, and then he got up to go away. "I will tell Miss Fraser how we have settled it," he said.

He found Miss Fraser lecturing the maid belonging to the villa on cleanliness in general, especially in sleeping-rooms. The maid stood listening with an amused smile on her expressionless, indolent face, only when Mr. Williams appeared she showed two glittering rows of teeth, made a courtesy, and disappeared.

"Well, Mr. Williams, I hope you have settled with Ursula to leave this place," Miss Fraser spoke impatiently. She considered Mr. Williams to belong to the class of men only fit to be harnessed and driven by a woman of superior mind—just the man who, in the hands of a fool, might be led to commit any folly. "If we stay here we shall be eaten by fleas. The habits and ways of these people are abominable."

Mr. Williams stared; he thought these subjects quite out of his province, and Miss Fraser's manner made him nervous.

"Well," he said, slowly, "I think we will wait another week, and see how Ursula is then."

"Oh! this is Ursula's wish, I suppose?"

"It is mine also." He longed to add it was his hope that Miss Fraser felt herself at liberty to return home as soon as she pleased, as her interference displeased him, but a conviction of her usefulness, and of his own utter inability to help Ursula if she fell ill again, kept him silent on this subject. He waited a moment, and then he said,—

"I think, Miss Fraser, it will be best not to have any more discussion with Ursula; she does not look so well as she did yesterday, and I dare say she feels weak and a little wayward: it is quite natural she should do so. We must be indulgent with her."

He tried to soften his meaning by an appealing glance, but Miss Fraser looked almost contemptuous.

"It is my own fault for expecting any help from him, I must manage it myself." Aloud she said, "You may be sure I shall not say anything imprudent, but I am quite sure your daughter will get well much faster when she is in her own home."

But though she took the hint of silence, and said nothing to Ursula, the girl's health did not improve; it seemed as if the prospect of going home had checked her recovery.

When the day came previous to that fixed for their departure, she went to her father and begged for another delay.

He was walking up and down under the ilex avenue. He stopped short in his walk, and looked at her anxiously.

"My dear—I—I"—he hesitated, it was so difficult to get out what he wished to say—"my dear Ursula, you have been a very long time away from Michael; don't you think he must be very lonely without you?"

Ursula flushed; he thought she looked angry.

"I am sure he is not, papa; he does not even ask me to come home; he does not say he wants me; I think it is perfectly indifferent to him, and he knows I like to be with you."

Her father looked pained and surprised.

"You are under some mistake," he said, gravely; "however, we will not discuss it. If you wish it so strongly, we will stay here a few days longer; but, Ursula, I think you must try and be ready by next Thursday."

Next Thursday! and this was Friday. Now that going home began to take a definite shape, Ursula shrank from it resolutely. She knew that she had been silly and wrong in her conduct to her husband, although the wrongness had consisted more in a series of neglects than of any decided overt transgression. She was unconscious of any decided guilt towards him, but her self-will pressed heavily at her heart, and had more to do with her sleepless nights and heavy eyes than the evening breezes, which, her father averred, were charged with the poisoned air of the Campagna.

She was still full of resistance and self-torment, when she met Miss Fraser in the sala. Ursula was passing on through the great desolate room full of cracked and half-obliterated paintings, and of mirrors with dulled glasses in blackened frames. Rachel stopped her.

"Ursula, my dear, please sit down a moment, I must ask you a question."

Ursula sat down unwillingly, but she kept her eyes fixed on the nearest door.

"Have you written to Michael since we came here?"

Ursula flushed, and then she got white. "No." She rose up, but she leaned on the back of the chair.

"Miss Fraser, I must say it out. You have been very good to me, and I deserved no goodness from you. I treated you shamefully, but I can't talk about my husband to any one. I cannot be interfered with about this. I want you to understand that it is useless to ask me questions or give me advice about him; and it is hard, too, for I would not refuse you anything if I could help it."

Miss Fraser winced. There was real affection in Ursula's eyes, and in her voice, but she was plainly as wrong-headed as ever.

"Even if I make you dislike me, my poor child, I must do my duty. I consider that you have behaved very badly to your husband. You have not written to him for a whole month. Are you not afraid of alienating him, and losing his affection, if no higher motive influences you? Will it not soften your meeting with him if you write even now?"

Ursula smiled, but her face had still the same white, wrung look.

"I don't want to quarrel with you. I would not answer, only I wonder that you, who ought to know me pretty well by this, should fancy that fear of any-

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thing was a motive that could influence me. I have not written to your cousin"—she would not say Michael—"and I do not intend to write to him. He will understand my silence, and as he is the only person interested in it; I do not feel called on to explain it; only please don't talk to me again about this, and—" She stopped, Miss Fraser had turned angrily away. Ursula went up to her and put her hand on her shoulder, "Don't be more angry with me than you can help. I can't bear it."

A sudden break in her voice startled her companion, but Ursula had darted out of the room before Miss Fraser knew how to answer her.

THE MISSING COMET OF BIELA.

WE have already in the "Leisure Hour" pointed out the remarkable coincidences found between the form and dimensions of the orbits of the ordinary August and November meteors and those of certain comets; but then our remarks were based principally on the remarkable coincidences of the orbit of these few selected comets, rather than on any actual proof or direct observation of their real material connection. Since that time, however, considerable attention has been given to the subject, and long before the beautiful display of falling stars observed on the evening of the 27th of November, 1872, the connection of comets and meteors was sufficiently established to warrant the Royal Astronomical Society in awarding its gold medal to Signor Schiaparelli, of Milan, who was the first to point out the similarity of the orbit of the August stream with that of a comet which appeared in 1866.

The remarkable shower of meteors of last November was not unexpected; but few observers, however, anticipated the enormous number observed at some places. At Moncalieri, in Italy, more than thirty thousand were counted. In Great Britain, the shower was most satisfactorily seen in Scotland and in the northern and midland districts of England. In London, and generally in all the southern counties, the sky was covered throughout the evening by very dense masses of cloud. For many years, the return of a shower had been predicted by M. D'Arrest as a likely circumstance to occur in the first days of December, 1878, while other astronomers had more recently predicted a fall at the end of November or the beginning of December in any year when the periodical comet of Biela ought to approach most nearly to the earth. Now it so happened that this unfortunate wanderer was supposed to have disappeared *in toto*, either by spontaneous combustion or by some internal convulsion causing such a separation of its constituent particles that no portion of it remained of sufficient magnitude to be detected by even the most powerful telescopes. Astronomers knew already that something strange had really occurred during the comet's wanderings, for previously to the end of 1845 it always appeared in the telescope as a single faint nebulosity, whereas about that time it was observed to be suddenly changed into two distinct nebulous patches, each head moving independently from the other, both being of equal magnitude. This marvellous transformation created considerable interest at the time; for, accustomed as we are to double stars, this the first example of a double comet was indeed a novelty. Falling stars have on many occa-

sions been observed about the time of the near approach of Biela's comet, notably one on the 30th of November, 1867, which Signor Zezioli did not hesitate to recognise as forming a portion of the stream of meteors which is supposed to be connected with it. During the last year, Professor A. Herschel drew the attention of astronomers particularly to the fact that Biela's comet would probably pass across the earth's track about the end of November, or the beginning of December, 1872, and that its presence might probably be detected by a shower of meteors. On the evening of November 27th, as we have already remarked, the shower came, and far surpassed in numbers that observed in the memorable display of November, 1866. The magnitude of the meteors, or the general brilliancy of the scene, was not, however, to be compared with the display of 1866. By a careful determination of the point of the heavens, with reference to the stars, where the meteors first appeared, the radiant-point was found to coincide exactly with that which it should have been on the supposition that the meteors were moving in the orbit of Biela's comet. Interesting as this fact is, the most extraordinary part of the story remains yet to be told.

Receiving a brush by the tail or some outlying portion of a comet, and then catching the intruder while running away, is certainly a romantic astronomical feat, the like of which had never before occurred. We have evidently had a very near approach to Biela's comet, and yet the effects upon our planet, either for good or for evil, have been utterly insignificant. This remarkable observation of what is supposed to have been a missing comet has created among astronomers the most lively interest, for its presence in our skies, announced by a splendid display of meteors, has come at the proper time to confirm the truth of certain speculations concerning the common origin of comets and meteors.

It does not require much reflection to show that the marvellous discovery of the evident though unseen presence of this comet, which had been almost given up as lost, is of a very remarkable character. Had the shower of meteors alone been observed, sufficient evidence would have been gleaned to strengthen very materially our conceived ideas of the probable physical connection of comets and meteors, and thus confirm in some measure the speculations of those who had previously considered the question, but this is not all.

Although the earth in its orbital journey passed through a part of the comet's attendant stream of meteors, thousands of which must have been ignited and destroyed by coming into contact with our atmosphere, yet the nucleus, or main body of the comet, was probably many millions of miles away. We have not, therefore, had the pleasure of going directly through the comet—an event which would possibly only have increased the meteoric display—but we have just been honoured by what we may appropriately term a brush of its tail, as a gentle reminder that the time had not yet come to give up the search after it, or to consider it altogether a lost comet.

There were several reasons why the comet was not observed before the night of the display of meteors. The principal cause is doubtless its extreme faintness, combined with some orbital disturbance which the comet had undergone during one of its journeys around the sun, which probably has drawn it out of its path, and thus prevented it from

following the orbit which had been computed from observations made at former apparitions. Again, the very cloudy state of the weather last November was not favourable for observations of minute celestial objects. A search had, indeed, been made for the comet, not only at this apparition, but on former occasions of near approach, but it has never been detected since 1852. That it has been observed now, although very imperfectly, is owing entirely to the completion of the line of telegraph to India. On November 30th, a fortunate idea occurred to a German astronomer, Dr. Klinkerfues, who thought it possible that as the meteor shower gave an indication of the exact position of the comet, an observation might be obtained if a speedy search were made. Hence arose his now celebrated telegram which he forwarded after the wanderer. As the truant comet had crossed the earth's path on November 27, and in consequence could no longer be visible in Europe, but only on the opposite side of the earth, Dr. Klinkerfues sent these few concise words to Mr. Pogson, the astronomer at Madras: "Biela touched earth on 27th; search near Theta Centauri." In one hour and thirty-five minutes this telegram reached Madras by way of Russia. The chance of Mr. Pogson detecting the comet was a very small one, especially as the sky had been generally clouded for some days, and the only possible time of observation was in the early morning shortly before sunrise. The first morning after the receipt of the telegram was unfavourable; so was the second; but on the third, during a temporary interval of clear sky, Mr. Pogson remarks: "I found Biela immediately." Thus, in perhaps the most brilliant portion of the starry heavens, among the stellar gems of the Centaur and the Southern Cross, this little nebulous-looking body was detected hurrying away with a velocity which in a few days would take it out of the limits of telescopic vision. Mr. Pogson, in a letter to the Astronomer Royal, wrote: "I was on the look-out from comet-rise to sunrise the next two mornings, but clouds and rain disappointed me. On the third attempt, however, I had better luck. Just about 17½ h. mean time (quarter past five in the morning), a brief blue space enabled me to find Biela, and though I could only get four comparisons with an anonymous star, it had moved forward 2.5s. in four minutes, and that settled its being the right object. I recorded it as—'Circular; bright, with a decided nucleus, but no tail, and about 45 seconds in diameter.' This was in strong twilight. Next morning I got a much better observation of it; seven comparisons with another anonymous star; two with one of our current Madras catalogue stars, and two with 7734 Taylor." At the second observation the comet appeared much larger, had a bright nucleus, and a faint but distinct tail.

The finding of the missing comet of Biela in this remarkable manner is certainly a very wonderful feat in astronomical observing. The observations are, however, not sufficient to be available in any great degree for the correction of the elements of its orbit, and we are therefore not sure that it will be detected at its next apparition in 1879. This comet is named after an Austrian officer who discovered it in 1826. Its orbit was afterwards found to be identical with that of a comet observed in 1772 and 1806. It was seen again in 1832, 1846, and 1852.

In a recent paper by Dr. Klinkerfues, he remarks

that an examination of Mr. Pogson's observations leaves scarcely a doubt as to the identity of the comet with one of the two heads of Biela's comet, and at the same time they show that an unusually small distance from the earth occurred on the evening of November 27th, when the meteoric shower was taking place.

EDWIN DUNKIN.

THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF KHIVA.*

BY HERMANN VAMBÉRY.

THE small tract of country corresponding to the lower course of the Oxus, and whose turn it now is to lose its independence through the southward encircling march of Russian columns, is considerably the smallest and least attractive of the various Khanates which in the aggregate make up Turkestan. Situated opposite that bank of the Oxus, at the point whence this river bends in a north-westerly direction towards the Sea of Aral, the Khanate of Khiva extends lengthways barely 200 geographical miles. Its greatest breadth (near Körtchek) is only twenty-five geographical miles at the most. Consideration of this fact lends colour to the saying that the real Khiva may be held to extend only as far as the waters of the Oxus can be directed, whether by canalisation natural or artificial.

Inasmuch as the right bank of the Oxus is higher than the left, and also because of its abutting upon an unclaimed and uncultivated strip of land, this part of Khiva only serves as a pasture-ground for neighbouring nomadic tribes. When we speak of Khiva, therefore, we must restrict our meaning to signify the left bank, where the extension of the land and the measure of its agricultural produce conform with nomadic wants; where life-sustaining irrigation can be made to dominate over the natural sandy expanse. In the middle ages, Khiva, or *Charezm*, as it was then called, must have possessed a better system of irrigation than now; for not only was its population one-third greater, but in pre-Islamic times it possessed a mental culture celebrated throughout the East. That culture caused the ancient pre-Islamic Charezm to be lauded through the whole expanse of Iran. After this small strip of territory, conterminous with the lower Oxus, had been forcibly converted to Mohammedanism, discord came upon the land along with the new form of religious belief. The Tahirs had occupied (though a foreign dynasty) the throne up to the end of the ninth century. They unfortunately on many occasions, inspired by lust of possession and of rule, had too frequently offered up the country's welfare a sacrifice to their own plans. Under the Seldschukids matters went still worse, and when at length the Khivan princes began, under support of the dominant faith, to lend assistance to particular States, then continuous wars brought the entire country to a most deplorable condition. Rough Mongolian hordes laid the territory waste with fire and sword. Wreaking destruction wherever they came, these barbarians well-nigh obliterated Khiva from the list of Turkoman dominions. The restless and warlike life inaugurated by the Dschengarids was followed up to recent times

* We are indebted for this communication to Hermann Vambéry, the celebrated Oriental traveller, now professor of Eastern languages in the University of Pesth.

by their descendants and representatives the Usbeks, almost without intermission.

The wars which devastated Khiva throughout this long period of time were either extraneous, *i.e.*, with Bokhara, with whose might Khiva was not powerful enough to successfully cope, or else were the result of civil strife which prevailed at short intervals. Wherever a cultured population becomes surrounded by whole hordes of wild adventurous nomadic tribes, there can be no longer any reasonable hope of peace and rest. The individual who possesses neither house nor home is unquestionably more covetous than a fixed husbandman. The aim of such an one is to make up for the deprivations pressing upon him by laying violent hands upon the property of his more favoured neighbour. Plunder, robbery, forcible possession of whole districts, forthwith become the rule of life, the order of the day. Beginning with a simple raid or exploit of cattle-lifting, the strife not unfrequently went on to the laying waste of an entire district, and the discomfiture of its settled population. In this way it has come about that during the last three centuries gone by, Khiva has been the prey of Kalmucks, Cossacks, Karakalpaks, Tomutes, and Usbeks; representatives of each nomadic race having laid hands successively upon the throne. It is only since the beginning of the present century that one and the same dynasty has succeeded in maintaining an unbroken regal succession. The members of this dynasty are of true Usbek origin, belonging to the tribe of Kungrat, the chief princes of which have succeeded in elevating themselves into a position of political importance through the successful repulse, by one, of a Russian attack, and through subjugation of the Turkomans to obedience, thus winning the respect of Persia.

True mental culture is wholly unknown to Khivan potentates of later times, and a similar remark applies to every ruler of Central Asia. The history of Khiva reflects the ethnical conditions of its dominant race. The present Usbeks of Khiva are an honest, plain, simple folk that, so far as moral qualities are concerned, resemble no others in Asia. As a mixed race, crossed with modern Turanian elements, they present a physique by which they may be discriminated from every other Central Asiatic population. Their complexion is extremely white, more particularly that of the women, who (a certain allowance being made for the almond-like set of their eyes) might readily be taken for natives of Suabia. The men are large-boned and sinewy, fellows with large heads and broad foreheads; fellows, moreover, whose beard-growth is nothing to boast of. Their solid footfall and heavy rolling gait, when passing on with eyes half-closed and sleepy-looking, are bodily characteristics which harmonise perfectly with Khivan mental attributes. One has only to glance at an Usbek, clad in native uncouth dress, to feel at once assured that the eye rests upon no European, however uncultured, but some true Asiatic. The articles of that uncouth dress are as follow: *viz.*, a clumsy fur cap for the head, a sort of thickly wadded dressing-gown coverlet for the body; and to protect the lower extremities of his nether limbs, the Khivan Usbek rejoices in boots, not fitted to measure, but quilted out to majestic size, with either straw, or, if a "swell," some few yards of calico. Further be pleased to understand, in the Khivan gentleman's boots, sole and upper leather are all of one piece; and now you have him.

Heavy eyes, solid footfall, and lumbering gait notwithstanding, I do not exactly find it in my heart to call the Usbek a lazy fellow. Gentle reader, student for the nonce of Usbek men and manners, suppose you and I just roam into a *Havli*, to use a native word, which rendered into English may be translated farmyard. Do not fail to note how luxuriantly green the sumach and dwarf-bean plants are. It is not altogether nature's handiwork, for those lazy-looking Usbeks, working with primitive spade, alike regardless of summer blaze or wintry chill, have long since led the fertilising Oxus through artificial water-ways of all dimensions to the cherished plants. Perhaps some slaves may come to view—ploughmen, as it may be, the plough with which they furrow the sandy soil being a mere pole studded with a sort of teeth; herdsmen, it too may be, whose duty it is to drive their masters' sheep and camels to pasture. Slaves, however, are a luxury only compatible with the means of rich Khivans. The general run of land-owners work spade in hand, winter and summer, month after month, with little intermission. Only the old *paterfamilias* it is who will be seen sitting on the pond-bank, shaded by his wide-spreading elms. Stay! perhaps we may add the farmyard beadle, whose time is divided between keeping order and playing with the children. In converse with these two old *patres familie* it was that I acquired my best store of acquaintance with Usbek life and character. Picture to yourself, gentle reader, a certain man of fifty or sixty perhaps, wonderfully tranquil in motion as in speech, a man of high honour to all seeming, so slow of speech that he may just vouchsafe one reply to every three questionings—one who never speaks at all until you have spoken; who never falls into a passion, who never laughs, whose every third word will convey either some Usbek moral or point of native philosophy; not that he plumes himself upon these things at all, only using them because they are supposed to accord with his age and standing. Figure to yourself all this, and you have before you a staid Khivan Usbek. It is impossible to convey a notion of the feeling of *bizarre* antediluvianism the converse of such old fellows as these awakened within me—men before whose eyes the world's progress might have been made manifest, yet in whom was to be found no one spark, *no atom*, so to speak, of European influence. Then and there the fact came home to me that I was indeed in Central Asia, a conviction that neither Japan nor China, neither the Malayan Archipelago, nor indeed any other part of Asia, is able any longer to convey.

Occasionally, in the course of conversation, some religious topic may be handled, but for the most part discourse will take an agricultural turn, or else be directed to such subjects as the political state of Turkomania, or the last caravan robbery. By your leave, gentle reader, you must swallow cups of tea without number, between talk and talk. It is sugarless, and reputed good for digestion, so one is supposed to drink a lot of it. Hot the beverage will be served to you, but pray don't blow—shake it about till cool enough to drink, such being the etiquette of Khiva. Presently will be brought a cloth containing fruit, fresh in summer, in winter dried. The Khivans are wonderful at fruit-eating between meals. You must eat much would you be polite, and whether it be pegging into the fruit, or extracting tit-bits of pillau, a heavy consumption on your part will be rewarded by such looks and gestures of satisfaction

by your host, that you cannot fail to be encouraged to do likewise for the future. To complete our picture of Khivan rural life we must put in the children, old-fashioned looking little things, conspicuous for their large melon-formed caps. There they will be clinging to knees, or clambering upon shoulders after the fashion of children elsewhere. How the little creatures do stare out of their large black eyes at a stranger to be sure, and if that stranger chances to be a dervish, which was just my case, how, after a little time, confidence being established, they will begin to play with the beads of one's rosary!

And how about the ladies? If not there, they will be thereabout, peeping at the stranger from behind trees and other posts of concealment. To mark the curiosity and wonderment their looks convey: What! a man without projecting cheek bones—without almond eyes—one who, being evidently foreign, has not a long black Persian beard—what sort of man can he be? How many tales of strange zones and outlandish places my presence originated in the wonder-smitten minds of Khivan ladies! At length increasing courage banishes feminine reserve. Out a lady will come from her concealment, and actually address the wondrous stranger. When he replies in passably good Usbeg speech, then her wonder attains its climax. He is a queer man, indeed! Mutual confidence being at length established, the womankind, just now so reserved, will unloose their tongues with a vengeance, asking you questions without end, some of the very plainest. Curiosity is an attribute of Eve's daughter all the wide world over. The more primitive the race and manners, the more pointed are these feminine interrogatories, and, if I may add, the more embarrassing to respondent.

In an ancient stronghold of barbarity, in a land of most repulsive cruelty, where the very air is full of shrieks of tortured slaves—where blood often flows in streams—there shall the reader gaze upon a picture where poetry mingles with the softest traits and purest characteristics of an ancient patriarchal life. For many centuries past, Khiva has been celebrated for its music and song, its poetry and troubadours. In Bokhara the stork, in Khiva the nightingale, is the favourite bird. This I heard in Turkey, and, in truth, I subsequently found the plaintive warbler no less markedly frequent in Khiva than its absence had been noteworthy in Bokhara. As I would take a morning walk in the month of June, under the garden walls of the Usbeg capital, out of almost each one of the thickly-leaved trees would gush the melodious, plaintive song of some grey-feathered *virtuoso*, giving me a morning concert gratis. "The nightingale has been the music-master through long years to the entire Khivan population": thus runs the adage, which, whether true or not, it is still an historical fact that for centuries past the best singers, violin and guitar players, known at Constantinople, Ispahan, Lahore, and the ancient Ferganas (where they acquired and still acquire princely favour and corresponding pay), were and are Khivans. Throughout entire Turkestan, amongst the Afghans in Northern Persia—everywhere, in short, where the Turkoman language is known—good music is designated by the term "*Urgendsch*," that is to say, appertaining to Khiva. Just as a traveller in Italy may sometimes hear most excellent music in a low pot-house, so in Khiva would he be similarly delighted

by song and instrumental music under the shade of garden walls, or even in the open country. Not less generally diffused is the taste for recitation and poetry. In these accomplishments the women specially excel, and when a stranger comes to understand the somewhat difficult rhythm, he readily attests the lyrical excellence of these native compositions. I have seen whole collections of this Usbeg poesy. The lyrics usually manifest the current traits of oriental thought. Not often can they be said to show much originality, yet for women of a barbarous land to cultivate the muses at all is a somewhat remarkable phenomenon. The *Muims*, those of mature age particularly, have often surprised me by the force of their parables, their many tales embodying moral precepts or traits of Khivan life. The proverbs I learnt in Khiva are so expressive that it may not be here out of place to give a few specimens. Proverbs constitute perhaps the best mirror of a people's mode of life and condition of being.

KHIVAN PROVERBS.

"He who steadies himself between two ships will certainly be drowned."

"Shame is worse than death."

"He who weeps from his heart will provoke tears even from the blind."

"A lean horse and a hero in a strange country each look amiss."

"When you go to law against the emperor, God himself should be the judge."

"The wise man strikes twice against one and the same stone."

"You may praise the Russian a thousand times, but his eyes will still be blue" (the reverse of handsome, according to Usbeg taste).

"Young men *may* die; old men *must*."

"The over-licking (flattering) tongue soon makes a wound."

"He who fears the sparrow will never sow millet."

"When the ass bears too light a load he wants to lie down."

"The spoken word cannot again be swallowed."

"He whose heart is full soon finds a loose tongue."

"Smoke rises only from large blocks of wood."

"A living mouse is better than a dead lion."

"Him whom God has marked, the prophet strikes with his wand."

"He who is on horseback no longer knows even his own father. (The armed man on horseback spares not his nearest relation.)"

"When you die, even your tomb shall be comfortable."

"Men speak to each other by words; animals by signs."

"Man is caught by his tongue, an ox by his horns."

"That which is taken in with the milk only goes out with the soul. (Faults contracted in infancy disappear but with death.)"

"The open mouth never remains hungry."

"Do not fasten up your garment until you see the water."

"Time does not bow to you; you must bow to time."

"When the parson visits you, don't be overjoyed; he will soon begin to beg."

"A great head has great cares."

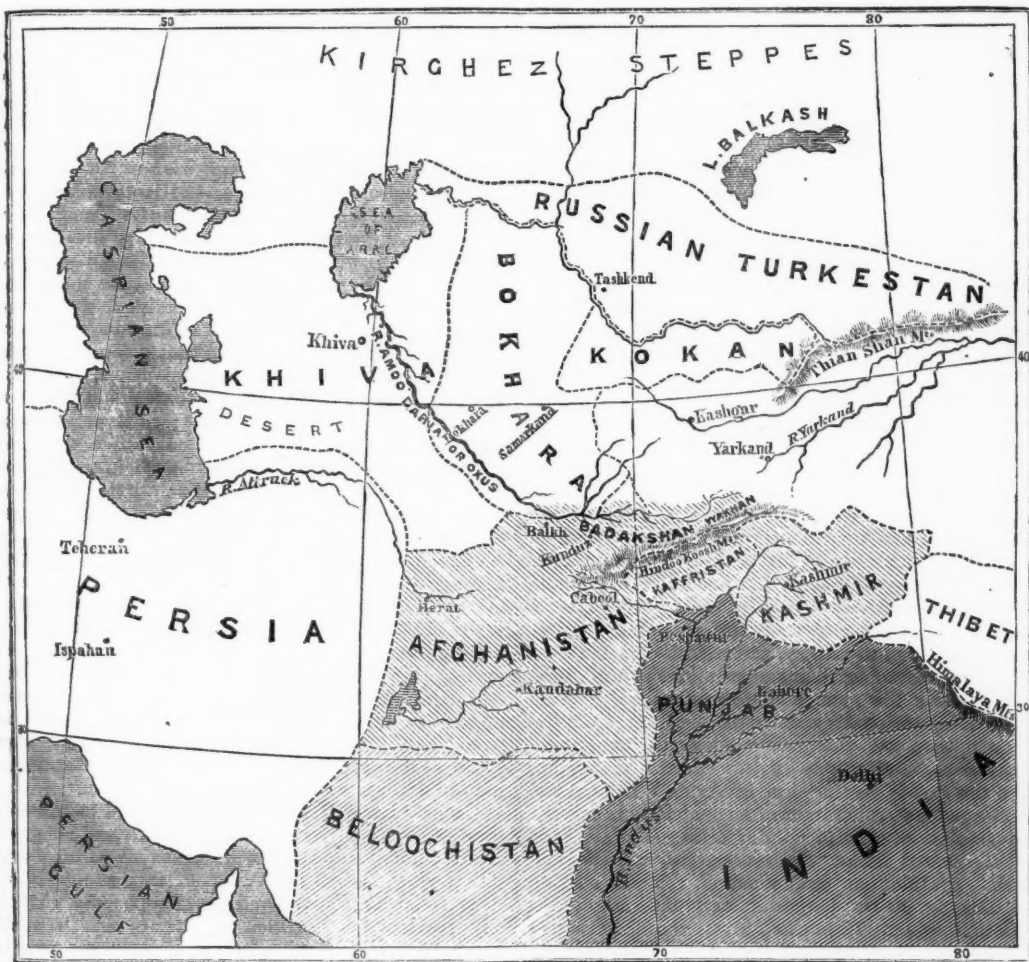
"Sense does not lie in the head, but in age."

"Every tribe has its thief; every mountain its wolf. (To be always on one's guard.)"

"One whip is enough for a good horse; for a bad one not a thousand."

"He who is not satisfied with drinking will not quench his thirst by licking."

tranquillity when the Turkoman woman from the steppe hurries in his direction, anxiously gazing upon the various goods as though they comprised the totality of all earthly treasure. I see the armourer and hardware merchant, as he proves the sharpness of his blades by running their edges across his finger-



SKETCH MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA.

"Man carries his superiority inside; the animals theirs outside."

"Were the hand to give all that the tongue promises, we should soon have no more beggars; everybody would be a prince."

"Be the distance never so great, travelling still is pleasant. Be the girl never so plain, she still is handsome."

In the midst of a prosaic, commonplace state of existence, sometimes now a picture of my Khivan experience will be reproduced before the mind's eye—that picture of a primitive life, with all its traits so grotesque and *bizarre*, with all its lights and shades. I see the bazaar smallware-man displaying his Russian rattans, English fancy ware, bright-coloured cloths, looking straight before him with inexpressible

naïveté, proclaiming by his sparkling eye how excellent his goods all are. Mark that fellow in yonder small booth, grey-bearded, shabbily attired. See how mysterious, how uncanny he looks out of his heavily-shaded eyes! That one is a quack doctor, who bears about with him his many chemicals and galenicals, stored in bags large and small, in wooden boxes ditto, in many-tinted vessels of ancient form. In these receptacles one would find dried roots, plants, rhubarb, sarsaparilla, wonder-working decoctions, and last, though not least in importance, the inevitable opium paste. Woe betide the incautious patient who resorts to yonder quack for advice and medicine! To him well applies the Usbeg reasoning propounded in the question, "What can the doctor's art avail to one whose death the Almighty has decreed?" Close by the quacksalver's booth, what next do we see? A

bookstall, to be sure, and a man of letters, whom we will not call a mere bookseller. He will bind you a book, transcribe you a book, and, to sum up all, he will publish you a book. Ah! what would I not give to have been able to spirit away to Europe one of these Usbeg bookstalls, with its manifold literary treasures! In those tawny-coloured pamphlets of coarse paper a whole repertory of literary wealth would be found concealed—Usbeg poetry and folklore, historical tracts, and other priceless documents. When tired I would often drop into a tea-booth with companions, and thence at my leisure contemplate the varied scene without—a more tranquil scene than would have been presented by any other capital of Central Asia.

Not less enjoyable to me was it to seat myself under the shade of some wide-spreading elm-tree near the bank of some reservoir, and watch the progress of amusement to which, in afternoon hours, certain of the public would resign themselves. Yonder little group, each individual with inevitable tea-cup in hand, gossiping with a neighbour. Another little group is watching the issue of a duel between a pair of lusty rams, which butt each other with fury. Blows are counted, noted, and betting goes on as to which gentleman will get second best off. Usbeg rams are uncommonly thick-pated. It is quite astonishing what a number of attacks will be made before heads are broken—forty or fifty sometimes. In all these *al fresco* meetings there is sure to be one group of improvisadores and story-tellers. The speaker has not to complain of any want of attention while he recites his tales of bygone heroes' exploits, of mystic lore, or his poetry. Young and old sit gaping with open mouths, until, perhaps, some speech more wonderful than the preceding excites the congregation to ecstasy, the recital of some deed of bravery inflaming their imaginations so that quiet listeners of a few moments ago run away shrieking.

The true national sports take place far from the towns, either on the pasture-grounds or on the monotonous sand steppe in the months of spring, when the sun is in the sign of Aries. Then comes the *Noruz feast*, a remnant of ancient Parsee culture. The population, clad in holiday attire, all then go to feed the sacred flame. Presents are then made, and mutual gratulations interchanged. Then singing and dancing go on day after day, until night has some time fallen. Then the Khivan youth, in serried columns, bear fuel to the sacred fire. They pile up the tamarisk branches with many a superstitious observance. All who can, deck their heads with flower garlands, in which roses of all varieties play a conspicuous part. It is indeed an interesting sight to gaze upon naturally rough and uncouth Usbegs in such a flowery attire. Amusements upon the steppe, whether upon wedding occasions or otherwise, mostly consist either of running for prizes, the winner receiving from the giver of the feast often two, three, or even more presents; or else an equestrian game, in which some young girl plays chief part. There you see her on a wild unsaddled horse, coursing madly over the sand. The prettiest girl is usually chosen for this sport, and she carries in her arms a young lamb. With this prize she gallops away, her horse kicking up thick clouds of sand; and the aim of the sport is that some young man shall succeed in winning the lamb from her. To succeed is no easy matter, for the Amazon is armed with a stout whip, which right and left she lays about

her lustily, until more than one youthful and hot-blooded aspirant for the prize gets many a red welt to show for his sport. I have often taken part in this Turkoman recreation, and hence from experience can say that hardly any contest can be more exciting. To horse! to horse! is a standing cry of the Usbegs. Well-to-do people stick to their horses almost without intermission, just to raise themselves from mother earth by so much higher, to feel more free and of greater self-importance. There they sit, only just alighting to go through their formalities of prayer, and to proclaim their affinity with dust.

So much, then, for the general picture of Usbeg civil and social life. Variations will be found in particular localities, and which must be taken into account by the inquirer who wishes to know the Usbegs thoroughly. Khiva, the metropolis, numbers at most some 12,000 souls, and is considered to be the headquarters of learning and intelligence, pretensions to which the existence of a college gives some colour. Nevertheless, Khiva is about the poorest of Central Asiatic cities. Near Khiva is the town of Jengi Urgentsch, a town which has a certain celebrity on account of its rather important commercial relations with Russia. Of equal pretensions is Görlen, about twenty-five miles distant from the capital. In its gardens the best melons grow; in its markets are sold the best bread, and its musicians and singers are of highest renown. Chadscha-ili is remarkable for the genealogic pride of its inhabitants, who claim a direct descent from the prophet. It is looked upon as a great honour to choose a bride from this town. Kungrad is inhabited by Karakalpaks and Turkomans, who hither drive their flocks and herds to market. Here meat, butter, and cream are all at their cheapest, but ready money down is the prevailing rule of purchase. I could yet speak of the ancient Urgentsch, now in ruins, but which was once the chief city. Several other small towns might be enumerated, but the inquisitive reader would hardly succeed in finding their locality, inasmuch as they consist of mere felt tents erected within garden enclosures.

Unfortunately, I must cast a dark and melancholy shadow over our picture of Khivan life and manners. It is a reference to the government and political condition which bears the stamp of utmost despotism. A traveller in Khiva, and more especially whilst a city resident, is horrified by crimes which would never have been dreamed of in Europe, not even in the darkest middle ages. Captive women bound to horses' tails and dragged for hours together; old men deprived of sight; maiming, mutilation, throwing from towers down upon spikes or sharp stones; flaying alive—all these forms of torture are common, deeds executed by State command without scruple or remorse. Despots everywhere are afraid of their own shadows; nevertheless in Khiva the imposition of this iron hand does not interfere with a strong sense of loyalty and feeling of respect for the sovereign, whose person is regarded with a veritable religious piety. This excess of magisterial authority has not contributed to soften the tone of Khivan manners. Taking this situation of the people into account, we must desire all success to the progress of Russian arms. Under a well-directed and solid government, Usbeg life in Khiva might offer a picture of tranquillity and honourable companionship such as may now be witnessed in Kazan, and amongst the Crimean Tartars.

ESSAYS UPON TEXTS.

BY THE REV. HARRY JONES.

INSINCERITY IN SPEECH.

"Every idle word."—Matt. xii. 36 (part).

INSINCERITY in speech is not a sin of ignorance.

It is a defiance of our own convictions, a defiance of that which we believe to be right. Such a course, if pursued, is hopeless. It leaves nothing upon which we can work; it indicates radical wrong, radical evil. To use a familiar illustration, if my clock loses or gains, I can regulate it; the error shows no necessary fault in the clock, the clock itself may be an excellent one. If I lengthen the pendulum so much, it will be too slow; if I shorten it so much, it will be too fast; if I adjust the pendulum correctly, the clock will keep good time. But if the clock sometimes gains and sometimes loses, it is radically bad, and no adjustment of the pendulum will make it keep good time. There is nothing to work upon; nothing to be done short of a recreation of the instrument itself. So when a man is true to his motive, whether it result in error or not, he still possesses the element of consistency, and is capable of adjustment. The zeal of St. Paul, when touched by the finger of God, at his conversion, altered his going, not his being. His zeal, properly adjusted, did good service in the Church of Christ.

But when a man really believes one thing, and says or does another, we do not know—no one knows—what to make of him. He defies the purposes of God, and the possibilities of man. Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt. Let the sap flow in the stem, and we can graft an apple or a pear, as we please. But if the sap be wrong—if there be no trustworthy action or life in the tree—if there be no vital motion that we can rely on, no treatment of the husbandman can make anything of it. So when the current of a man's life is not followed by its natural fruit, but, seeing good, he puts forth wrong, and perceiving what he believes to be truth, gives utterance to falsehood, he sins against the main sap of life, against the stream of his being, against whatever element of sincerity he may have. False to his convictions, he is thus, humanly speaking, inaccessible to correction, and retains no excuse or plea for forgiveness. He repudiates that divine influence, that heaven-sent power, which is at least the assurance of recovery from error. There is hope of the sincerely wrong man; but radical insincerity is the most fatal condition of moral life.

Bordering on this, however, are many lesser lapses and parentheses of purpose in which we are tempted to speak idly. I do not mean that we are guilty of any grave intention to deceive others, or to mask ourselves, but the tide of purpose seems to be slack, and we say what we hardly mean. I do not refer to mere talking against time, or the filling in of a gap which we want to pass, for the sheerest verbiage may have a very intelligible purpose in such a case. A man sometimes talks for mere lack of purpose, from pure weariness of silence, and, judged by those wise people who would have every sentence bristling with sense, or pregnant with meaning, such speech is idle. But it is not idle in the gravest way; it is not purposeless. If we were never to open our mouths except when we had something to say which was

obviously worth listening to, we should be a silent and melancholy generation indeed. There is much speech which is intended to pass in at one ear and out of the other, and yet is not idle in the true sense. It is really not purposeless; it fills a very important place in the intercourse of mankind. It belongs to the great processes of relaxation, and, however superficial it may be, has its true connection with the roots of life.

The depths of the Atlantic have their foam as well as their great waves. The fluttering leaf of the topmost bough belongs to the oak as much as the solid timber of the trunk. The gnats which dance in the evening sunshine are a part of the great Creator's world; and the shallowest rill which trickles over the pebbles is as truly fulfilling the great law of gravitation as the huge green mass of water which slowly turns its mighty bulk over the precipices of Niagara.

"Idle words," in the true sense of the term, are not mere passing prattle. The airiest conversation may belong to human speech as truly and honestly as the gravest sentences of the philosopher. It is not really or necessarily idle. The true poison of idleness or emptiness in speech may rather be found in those utterances which cost an effort. It is exhibited when we take pains to say what we think is the "proper" thing to be said, though all the while we are conscious of no desire to deliver ourselves.

Then it would be better to say nothing. Important nonsense is the worst kind of nonsense. Nothing of the sort is more desolately depressing than to hear a man speak simply because he thinks he is expected to make a speech. He is generally quite mistaken in his estimate of the appetite which is felt for his utterances; but be that as it may—for I suppose there must be some depraved people who really like to hear what has come to acquire the name of "speechifying," or the vice would have collapsed for want of support—be that as it may, the real idleness of speech, that which comes nearest to fatal insincerity, is found in the utterances which cost an effort.

Say what you think, rather than what you imagine other people expect you to say. Or if you feel, as we often may, that we had better not, or not then, say what we think, say nothing. At any rate, believe that it is a genuine promotion of the health of society to let our words be honestly ours. Affect no sentiments which you do not own. I do not of course refer to those phrases of courtesy which are universally current and understood, as when a man sets his signature to the statement that he is an obedient servant to one whom perhaps he has just been declining to serve. Nor do I mean that we are expected to give utterance to each sentiment which arises in our hearts. That would be selfish. But do not, especially in religion, affect feelings which are alien to you. It is incalculable what wanton harm is done by this. We can see it when a man, more honest than others, ventures to put some criticism, which has risen in many minds, into words; or, Luther-like, to question some empty dictum which has been long tacitly permitted to exist. By a touch he can thus free many a mind. He simply makes

bold to open the door and let himself out; and lo! he has provided an exit for a grateful stream of prisoners who follow him, and then see that after all they might just as well have delivered themselves.

The real idle words, words, that is, which are purposeless in the utterer, and thus mischievous to him in the utterance, are indeed found in the graver uses of speech. And it is mainly by these words that we shall be justified and condemned. A "pious" sentence may be more injurious to a man's soul than an angry one, for the latter has at least the merit of honesty, while the former may be an irreverent and insincere utterance of formalism, which is the worst kind of hurt to ourselves.

Words which are excellent in themselves are not good in us, unless they come of the abundance of the heart. The identity of the word with the utterer is emphatic. By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. As speaking against the grave promptings of the spirit of truth within us indicates a radically evil condition, so every idle word, every word which has no real purpose except to get itself uttered as the correct thing, is arraigned before the permanent assize of God's truth—has to be given account of in the day of judgment.

OSCAR II.

THE BERNADOTTES OF SWEDEN.

ON the 18th of September last the third monarch of the Bernadotte dynasty, Charles xv, died at Malmoe; and two days later, his brother, Prince Oscar, as Oscar II, was proclaimed at Stockholm and Christiania King of Sweden and Norway. During this present month the coronation of King Oscar will take place. The deceased Charles xv, and the now reigning Oscar II, sons of Oscar I, are grandchildren of the celebrated Marshal Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte-Corvo, the founder of the dynasty. Few things in history are more remarkable than Bernadotte's elevation to the Swedish throne, and few royal houses have produced a line of rulers so able, enlightened, and patriotic.

Jean Baptist Jules Bernadotte, the son of a lawyer, was born at Pau, in the Lower Pyrenees, on the 26th January, 1764. The sublime scenery of the snow-crowned mountainous range daily spread before his youthful gaze, perhaps touched with an elevating influence his ardent and impulsive nature. Perhaps also the historical associations clustering around the Castle of Pau, the birthplace and early home of Henry IV, under the shadow of which he was reared, may have acted on Bernadotte's imagination, and given to his mind that military bent which led him at an early age to renounce his father's profession, and to enlist in the French army as a private soldier.

The French Revolution occurring some years later, swept away the ancient distinction of classes, and opened up to all the path of preferment. The abilities of Bernadotte had thus free scope, and his advancement was rapid. In 1792 he was made a colonel, in the following year a general of brigade, and soon after a general of division. In the campaigns of the Rhine and of Italy he displayed the highest military talent. He was appointed ambassador at Vienna by the Directory, and during Buonaparte's absence in Egypt he acted as minister of war. He reorganised the whole army, and pre-

pared the way for the conquest of Holland. Napoleon could not conceal his jealousy of Bernadotte, yet on the establishment of the Empire he made him a marshal, and also nominated him to the government of Hanover. At the battle of Austerlitz the corps commanded by Bernadotte broke through the centre of the Russian army, and on the 5th of June, 1806, Napoleon appointed him Prince of Ponte-Corvo. In the war against Prussia, Bernadotte again greatly distinguished himself; and when Lübeck was compelled to capitulate, he behaved with great kindness towards 1,500 Swedish prisoners. This generous conduct excited for him the utmost esteem in Sweden, and was probably the foundation of that national regard which afterwards raised him to the throne.

In 1810 the assembled States of Sweden nominated Bernadotte as successor to Charles XIII. This distinction he owed perhaps not less to the nobility of his character than to his military talents. The jealousy exhibited by Napoleon on the occasion, and Bernadotte's politic rebuke, are characteristic of the two men. "What!" said Bernadotte, "would you make me greater than yourself, by compelling me to refuse a crown?" Napoleon could only reply, "Go, our fates must be accomplished." The circumstances which led to this extraordinary event were briefly these. In March, 1809, Gustavus IV, in consequence of incapacity, had been compelled to abdicate his crown, and the States of Sweden had declared him and his descendants excluded from the throne for ever. His uncle, the Duke of Sudermania, assumed the government under the title of Charles XIII; but being childless, the brother of the reigning Duke of Augustenburg was chosen as his heir and successor. This young man died suddenly in May, 1810, and it became necessary to choose another heir to the crown. Many candidates offered themselves, but none seemed to have the requirements needful, where a man of experience, firmness, and military abilities was so requisite. The name of Bernadotte, already known so favourably in Sweden by his kind behaviour to the Swedish prisoners, and by his moderation and wisdom in the government of the Hanseatic towns, when suggested was at once enthusiastically accepted by the Swedish people. Accompanied by his son, a boy of eleven years of age, afterwards Oscar I, he repaired to Sweden, and after acknowledging the Lutheran faith, in presence of the Bishop of Upsala and other Swedish dignitaries, Bernadotte, on the 31st October, 1810, was formally presented to the Assembly of States. Adopted by Charles XIII, the French soldier assumed the name of Charles John, and took the oath as Crown Prince and heir to the throne.

What Bernadotte did for Sweden as Crown Prince, and after his accession to the throne in 1818, are matters of history. The national interests required him to join the coalition against Napoleon. Norway, which belonged to Denmark, was the prize for which he fought. By the treaty of Kiel, January 14th, 1814, that country was ceded to Sweden. The Norwegians, however, did not recognise this cession, but declared themselves independent, and elected a Danish prince, Christian Frederick, King of Norway. Bernadotte, however, entered Norway without serious resistance, and foreign powers refusing to recognise the newly-elected king, the Norwegians were obliged to conclude the convention of Moss, by which the independency of Norway in union with Sweden was solemnly proclaimed. The charter of

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1815 declares the union of the two kingdoms indissoluble, but without prejudice to the separate government, constitution, and code of laws of Sweden and Norway. An abler and wiser king than Bernadotte, who ruled as Charles XIV, never occupied the Swedish

Bernadotte's son, Oscar I, was born in Paris, and at the age of nine entered the Imperial Lyceum, where his name may still be seen on the walls of that establishment. At Stockholm he was placed under the tuition of the poet Atterborn, and in the course



OSCAR II.

throne. All his acts justified the choice of the people. Bold and energetic in war, he showed himself no less endowed with the qualifications and capacity of a wise monarch in peace. Among other works, he promoted agriculture and commerce, made roads and canals, built the great central fortress of Karlsburg, and completed the great Gotha Canal which unites the Northern Sea with the Baltic.

Bernadotte had married in 1798 Eugénie Désirée, the daughter of a merchant named Clary, of Marseilles, and sister to the wife of Joseph Buonaparte. Queen Désirée survived her husband. In January, 1844, on the very day he entered his eightieth year, Charles XIV was taken ill, and on the 8th March following he died. The old king bequeathed to his son a personal fortune of eighty million francs—his accumulated savings from the civil list.

of a year Bernadotte had the satisfaction of finding that his son had mastered the language of their adopted country. As for himself, he was never able to do more than stammer a few words in Swedish. French was, and remained to the last, his natural idiom. Oscar did not at all inherit the mental characteristics of his father. He was of a mild and refined nature, little given to military matters, but noble and high-minded, and strongly attracted by serious studies, an intelligent friend of art and poetry, and an admirer of science, and himself a scholar. His work on "Prisons and Punishments" has been translated into English. He had the reputation of being one of the most handsome men of his day; and so far as it is possible to abstract the mind from the stiff and ungracious forms of dress and toilet apparent in his portraits, and which distinguished the period, one may readily subscribe to the opinion.

He seldom left the Swedish soil; but he did so in 1823, when he married the Princess Josephine of Leuchtenberg, with whom he lived in happy union, surrounded by blooming and promising children. His reign was devoted to interior reform and development, and laid the ground for the remarkable and astonishing progress of which Sweden is now beginning to reap the fruits.

At the French Revolution of 1848, King Oscar stood aloof from the great events of the period; and though Swedish and Norwegian troops were sent to Denmark, and did even, during the Malmoe Armistice, occupy part of Schleswig, he avoided taking part directly in the Dano-German war. Had he been more enterprising, it is not improbable that one of his sons would have been elected to the Danish throne on the demise of the heirless Frederick VII, and a Scandinavian union in this way prepared. Indeed, there is some foundation for the belief that some time between 1848 and 1851, before the negotiations about the succession in Denmark had concentrated thoughts upon the Prince Christian of Glücksburg, [the inheritance to the Danish crown was offered to the third son of King Oscar, the present King of Sweden and Norway. Had the project been carried to completion, the three Scandinavian kingdoms would at this day, as events have befallen, have been united under one ruler. But the future was not foreseen. Prince Oscar was then separated from the Swedish crown by two elder brothers, both in unbroken health, and promising to their house a numerous progeny.

Between King Oscar I and Frederick VII of Denmark there existed a growing friendship. The first meetings of Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian students in Stockholm, and afterwards in Copenhagen, in favour of Scandinavian unity, were regarded with dislike by the then reigning sovereigns of both countries; but in 1856, when the Scandinavian students had another meeting at Stockholm, King Oscar I invited them out to Drottningholm Castle, and made them a speech, in which he declared his sympathy with the movement.

During the Crimean war, Oscar I succeeded in preserving the neutrality of his States, and by the treaty of November, 1855, concluded with the Western Powers, he obtained the guarantee of the independence of his two kingdoms, and thus broke the spell of dependency upon Russia which had pressed upon Sweden ever since 1813. The last days of King Oscar were pitiful in the extreme; a softness of the brain veiled his noble mind and clear intellect, and after three years of suffering and slowly pining away, he died on the 8th July, 1859. Of his children by Queen Josephine, Prince Gustavus, the second son, a prince of the brightest promise, a gifted poet and musician, died in 1852, only twenty-five years old. An only daughter, the Princess Eugénie, is unmarried and in poor health, dividing her time between works of charity and pious studies. The eldest son, Charles, Crown Prince and Regent during the king's illness, succeeded to the throne. Prince Oscar, third son, is now reigning monarch; the fourth was the late Augustus, Duke of Dalarna, who died in March.

The feeling of friendship between the courts of Sweden and Denmark became more intense on the accession of Charles XV to the Swedish throne. Charles Louis Eugene Bernadotte was the first of his dynasty born on Swedish soil. Distinguished from

his youth by uncommon intelligence, winning manners, and great skill in all manly accomplishments, he was popular when a boy, and became a favourite with the nation before he had grown to man's estate. When he ascended the throne thirteen years ago, all Sweden knew that she had exchanged a benevolent but unpretending king for a quick, energetic, and enterprising one. If the career of Charles XV of Sweden has not fulfilled the expectations formed of his character and ability, the shortcoming is owing not so much to any want of strength of mind or will on his part, as to the events and circumstances of his time, which hindered Sweden from playing any very prominent part in European politics. In some respects he resembled his madcap predecessor, Charles XII. "What he really wanted," says a writer, "was to recover the influences Sweden formerly possessed in the council of nations; what he had most at heart was to reassert the station of the people that had defeated the Russians in times of yore, and struggled for victory with Austria on the sanguinary field of Lützen. As a preliminary to this ambitious design, he endeavoured to increase his army, and to form the Scandinavian north into as compact a body as circumstances would admit of. He accordingly exerted himself to the utmost to institute a common parliament for Sweden and Norway; he was all in favour of a close alliance with Denmark for better for worse; and he repeatedly gave indications that he was not altogether averse from the idea of Scandinavian unity started by advanced politicians on either side of the Sound. But in all this he failed. The overwhelming force of events which he was powerless to control: the peculiar difficulties of his position as the head of two distinct governments, and the marked disinclination of his people to launch into foreign and untried waters—all combined to disappoint his cherished hopes." When Denmark was beset by the combined forces of Austria and Prussia, it was not the fault of the Swedish king, but of his ministers, that he did not rush to her aid with an army.

The great achievement of Charles XV was the renovation of the Swedish system of parliamentary representation. He proposed that the four ancient Houses of Nobility, Clergy, Citizens, and Peasants, whose action hindered legislation, should be superseded by two Chambers—an Upper and a Lower—elected from all classes promiscuously. After six years of opposition and discussion, the king's plan was at length carried into effect. Many minor reforms speedily followed. Improvements were made in the criminal law; guilds abolished; passports abrogated; the nobility placed on a footing of equality with the other classes in courts of law; Jews permitted to possess real property and to marry Lutherans; a free-trade policy inaugurated, and a number of other measures adopted which would have been impossible under the old régime. Religious liberty has also more recently made progress in Sweden.

King Charles, like his father and brothers, was addicted to literature. His poems, published both in Swedish and German, and also translated into English, are, says a writer, "replete with the noble melancholy of a lofty but unsatisfied mind." He was an enthusiastic landscape painter, and a collector of antiquities. Two of his specialities—drinking cups and armour—form a fine collection in the Summer Palace at Stockholm. He is also distinguished as an author on military matters, his essays on artillery and modern tactics ranking very high in professional

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literature. Frank, amiable, sincerely devoted to his people and country, he employed his great talents for the welfare of the State, and was much loved by all classes of his subjects.

By his marriage with the Princess Louisa of Orange, who shortly predeceased him, he had two children—a son, who died in 1854, at the age of two years, and a daughter, the Princess Louisa, now married to the Danish Crown Prince. But for the Salic law which prevails in Sweden, the three northern kingdoms might by this marriage have realised the desired Scandinavian unity. That law, however, carried the succession to Prince Oscar, whose character and training eminently fitted him for a constitutional ruler.

The now reigning Oscar II was born 21st January, 1829, and is perhaps the most gifted of the late King Oscar's children: carefully educated, an eloquent speaker, a poet of taste, and a clever writer. Unlike his brother, Charles xv, who was a soldier, Oscar entered the naval service, and was for many years an admiral of the fleet, though he has held at the same time a grade in the army. He has travelled much, and will be known by many in this country from his repeated visits. The most prolonged of these was during the Exhibition of 1862, at the opening of which he assisted. He was also in England in 1871. At the International Exhibition of that year, Mr. Baines, M.P. for Leeds, met with Prince Oscar, and has given an interesting account of a conversation he held with him in the Exhibition building. Mr. Baines speaks of the prince as "the able and enlightened promoter of education, industry, art, and all that can adorn a country." The prince took the English educationist to see the Model Swedish School in the building, and explained it as fully as a schoolmaster could have done. "I never," says Mr. Baines, "saw so rich and varied an amount of educational appliances of every kind. I found the prince a most interesting instructor, and could not sufficiently admire his perfect courtesy or the goodness which placed his companions at their ease and on a level with himself. If I do not mistake, he will prove a benevolent and enlightened ruler."

On the occasion of his latest visit Prince Oscar laid the foundation-stone of a new Scandinavian church in Rotherhithe, where a large number of Swedish sailors and workmen are employed. After the ceremony, in replying to the toast of his health, the prince said: "It is now about a quarter of a century since for the first time I beheld your hospitable shores. You know that in the early days of youth one feels deeply, and that impressions then made are lasting. I was then in the naval service; and I can truly say that from that visit there sprung up in my heart the first sympathetic feeling for Great Britain. Since then I have been many times in England, and this feeling for your country has been only confirmed and strengthened. How could it be otherwise? I am myself the son of a free nation—a nation which has never bowed its head to foreign conquest. Hence I think I have a right to speak to you in friendly and sympathetic language. I am glad to be able at this time to give expression to my experience—that in all communications I have had with them, in all the different ways I have been brought into contact with your countrymen, I have found that when a friendly hand was once stretched out by an Englishman, that hand was given with a good heart and never withdrawn."

In December last, a convention for establishing a uniform system of coinage in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, was signed at Stockholm. And on the opening of the Swedish Diet in January, the new king, after alluding affectionately to his late brother, Charles xv, advocated the further development of the idea of a Scandinavian union. The form which the question will probably assume in the future, will be that of a federal union for purposes of defence in foreign affairs, and for community of action wherever the mutual interests of the three kingdoms are jointly concerned, with a federal parliament to regulate a common budget for the expenses of the union.

The royal family of Sweden and Norway has a civil list of £109,699: £78,722 from Sweden, and £30,977 from Norway. The sovereign has, besides, an annuity of £16,666 voted to the first Bernadotte monarch and his successors on the throne of Sweden.

Education, as is known, is well advanced in Sweden. Public instruction is gratuitous and compulsory, and children not attending school under the supervision of the Government must furnish proof of having been privately educated. In 1870 nearly eighty per cent. of all the children between eight and fifteen years attended the national schools.

The public debt of Sweden, £7,000,000, has been almost exclusively incurred in the construction of railways. It is calculated that the system of railways at present planned will be completed in 1874. The industry and commerce of the country has already through their action been largely developed. The new reign which has opened so auspiciously is one of large promise to Sweden and Norway. The words of King Oscar, used in his proclamation in September last, are sincere words. "My motto," he says, "will be the welfare of both peoples. It will be the expression of my ardent affection for both nations, united by my great ancestor. Their prosperity will always be present to my mind as the highest aim of my endeavours."

Of his honest character, pure will, and lofty ideal of a king's duties, there is but one opinion. King Oscar married, 6th June, 1857, Sophia, daughter of Duke William of Nassau. From this union there are four sons, the eldest of whom, Gustavus, born 16th of June, 1858, bears the title of Duke of Wermeland, and is now Crown Prince of Sweden and Norway, and heir-apparent to the throne.

Varieties.

THE LATE DR. GUTHRIE.—Speaking one day about an Education Bill just brought in by the Lord-Advocate, the thought flashed across him that the Free Church had been accused of supporting it for sectarian reasons, when he suddenly broke off his argument, and, with tears running down his cheeks, exclaimed, "What care I for Free Church, or any Church upon earth, in comparison with my desire to save and bless those poor wretched children in the High Street!" An intelligent auditor afterwards said of this exclamation, "It was as though a shock of electricity had passed through the audience." On another occasion he was preaching from the text, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." He had described the feelings of a father who had to send a depraved son away from his door; and had made the audience feel how the child knew that he had but to amend and reform, and his father would receive him; and then, lifting himself up in the pulpit and spreading his hands, he thundered out the

words, "Is there any one in this house who believes that I would have pleasure in the death of the wicked? Would not I do whatever I could to rescue the worst among you? And what am I, sinner as I am, in comparison with Him whose love I am vindicating?" One who was in the house at the time said that "it was as though a prophet spoke." Dr. Guthrie's chief force as a preacher was, however, not derived from any impromptu expressions. His discourses were, we believe, carefully prepared, and the most striking passages were committed to memory. In the four sermons he published under the title of "The City: its Sins and Sorrows," there are some singularly graphic descriptions of Edinburgh as seen from the heights hard by the city; and again, of the same ancient capital on a nearer view, where her sins and sorrows hide themselves. He was fond of telling his personal experiences in that mission to the outcast children of the streets which he had almost made his own. He was as welcome to the school as to the church, and was as much admired and revered by the little Arabs he had saved as by his congregation. If he took a friend with him to see the school, it was impossible not to be struck with the joyous glances with which the children looked up to him, and the readiness with which they answered his questions. He had words of encouragement for one, of sympathy with another, of cheerful recognition for them all. "Well done, my lad; you will make your way in the world, sir," he would say in answer to the quick reply of a poor boy whose way even to a decent living seemed to be a long one. He was a man of great, genial nature, a true philanthropist, a preacher who had the fire of earnestness, and a writer whose works, if not written to live, were, at least, useful and valuable in their day.—*Daily News*.

SUNDAY CABS.—At a recent deputation meeting, Mr. Cousins, a cab-owner and driver of twenty years, having spoken, Mr. Davis, a cab-driver, said he had driven a cab for thirty-eight years, and was fully aware of the evils of Sunday labour. The men who worked on the omnibuses were nothing less than slaves, as they constantly worked from fourteen to sixteen hours per day, many of them continuing their labour day after day for a fortnight, and sometimes for a month, without a day's intermission. When they came home at night their children were gone to bed, and when they got up in the morning the children were gone to school; so that a father scarcely knew his own children, and the homes were no comfort to them. If the Christian community were to use all their efforts to do away with the Sunday traffic as far as they were concerned, the profits would be so small as to make it scarcely worth while for the owners to send out the vehicles. Mr. Cochran, a cab-proprietor, read a memorial to a similar effect, signed by twenty-seven out of twenty-eight drivers in his employ. Among other things it is stated:—That there are 10,199 cab-drivers, 2,460 stage-drivers, and 3,218 omnibus-conductors in the metropolis, most of whom had no rest on the Sabbath, and the work was principally that of driving persons to and from places of worship. In the winter the London General Omnibus Company ran one journey less on each route, but in the summer they ran two journeys more, and the men, instead of working thirteen hours a day, had to work sixteen.

CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.—The knowledge of God, without the knowledge of our own misery, produces pride. The knowledge of our own misery, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, produces despair. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ exempts us both from pride and despair; because in him we see God, our own misery, and the only way of recovery from it. We may know God without knowing our own miseries, or our own miseries without knowing God; or we may know both without knowing the means of deliverance from the miseries which oppress us. But we cannot know Jesus Christ without at the same time knowing God, our own miseries, and the remedy for them; because Jesus Christ is not only God, but he is God the healer of our miseries.—*Pascal*.

COMMERCE OF JERUSALEM.—The population of the city is computed at 15,000, rather more than half of them Jews, the rest Moslems and Christians. The chief native industry is the manufacture of soap and "Jerusalem ware," this latter consisting of chaplets, crucifixes, beads, crosses, and the like, made for the most part at Bethlehem, and sold to the pilgrims who annually flock to the holy city to the number of about 6,000. The population of the entire Sandjak, or province, is estimated at 200,000, of whom 160,000 are Mohammedans. Owing to the absence of good roads and the insecurity arising from the predatory tribes of Bedouins inhabiting the outskirts of the district, but who could easily be kept in check, vast and fertile plains lie waste or are but partially and poorly cultivated; factories

are not to be met with, and no mines are worked, though it is believed that sulphur, bitumen, and rock-salt abound on the shores of the Dead Sea. The principal, if not the only imports from England are cotton goods, and some colonials, but the former have much diminished since the cotton crisis; it is calculated that 300 bales of these goods, of the value of £16,000, annually find their way here. The exports are olive oil and grain. Very little is done in cotton culture, what is raised being of inferior quality and consumed on the spot; but it is believed that in many parts of the country cotton to a large extent might be successfully cultivated, with good seed and proper instruction and implements given to the peasantry. The vegetable produce is barely sufficient for local requirements. Jaffa is the port through which Jerusalem deals with foreign countries.

CHRISTMAS-DAY IN SYDNEY.—Were your readers here to-day they would be in no doubt about our being able to keep Boxing-day as well as Christmas-day, not omitting the rest sadly common to the small tradesmen and labouring classes. In fact, I think we outdo the home institution in its universality. Beyond the newspaper offices and a few fruiterers', bakers', and butchers' shops, all signs of business are lost, and the town is as silent as the tomb. The omnibus system is broken up for to-day, the vehicles being diverted from their usual tracks and drawn into byways, hamper-laden. The public gardens are filled to overflowing, with mothers and fathers and children, the suburbs have become suddenly populous, and the harbour is gay with the sails and flags and cheers of innumerable water parties, the bays and islets being fringed with holiday-makers. Every steamer, boat, and conveyance that is to be had is brought into requisition. Christmas-day in these parts, despite the heat, is generally kept at home, the early part of the day being devoted to a little church and a heavy dinner, and the latter portion to amusements *en famille*. Such is the force of habit.—*Times Correspondent*.

STATISTICAL FALLACIES.—In the discussions of the London School Board one of the members, Canon Cromwell, stated that the Board were providing schools for 100,000 children, while there were vacancies in existing schools for 106,224 children. Mr. Watson, another member, in replying, said that "these 106,224 vacancies include places in schools situated in neighbourhoods where few children of the wage-earning class are to be found; in orphanages, where the children are admitted by ballot and are clothed and boarded; in military schools available only for the children of soldiers; in schools where the fees are so high that the children of the very poor are practically excluded; and in schools whose managers decline to admit the too often ragged children for whom we are charged to make provision. Canon Cromwell is also aware that managers of efficient schools have already intimated their intention of closing their doors as soon as we are ready to receive their children. When these deductions have been made the result will be very different." We only quote this as an illustration of the use that can be made of the same figures for opposite purposes.

CATACOMBS OF ROME.—Hidden from the world during a thousand years, the monumental antiquities of the catacombs came forth just as the corruption of Rome was complete, and its reformation from error commenced, as important witnesses in the controversy which was henceforth to be maintained; but the state of learning was not then favourable for the full development of their testimony. The popes, however, preserved the stones in their museum; eminent antiquarians (Roman Catholics) copied and published the inscriptions, and thus preserved them from being lost, until this day, when the enemy "coming in like a flood," Christians are permitted to lift them up as a standard against error and false religion. This is not the first time in the world's history that a culprit has treasured up the evidence which has ultimately proved the means of his conviction.—*The Catacombs of Rome, by Benjamin Scott, F.R.A.S., Chamberlain of the City of London. (Longmans)*

CRITICISM AT FAULT.—At a lecture delivered at Boston by Dr. Willett, the lecturer mentioned a disagreeable incident which occurred to him respecting an owl. It seems that Dr. Willett is a connoisseur in bird-stuffing, and is in the habit of criticising other people's bird-stuffing severely. Walking one day with a gentleman, he stopped at a window where a gigantic owl was exhibited. "You see," said the doctor to his friend, "that there is a magnificent bird utterly ruined by unskilful stuffing. Notice the mounting. Execrable, isn't it? No living owl ever rested in that position. And the eyes are fully a third larger than any owl ever possessed." At this moment the stuffed bird raised one foot and solemnly blinked at his critic, who said very little more respecting stuffed owls that afternoon.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

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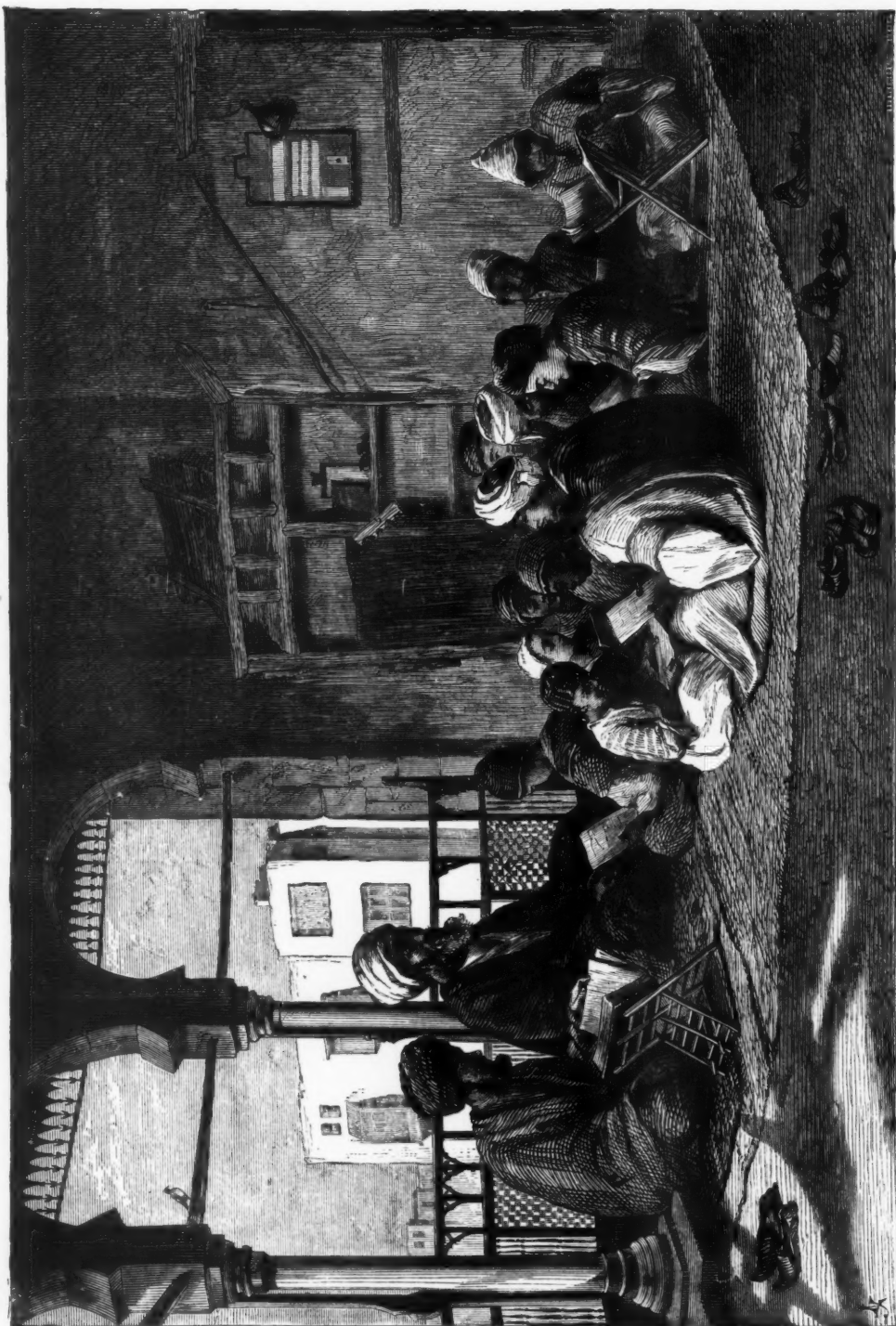
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